

# DISCOVER YOUR UNIQUE FIGHTING STYLE

Your Fighting Style is the way that you react to feeling emotionally disconnected from your partner. Research shows that most of us react to emotional disconnection by becoming *critical and demanding* or by *withdrawing and shutting down emotionally*. I call these two archetypes the HAILSTORM and the TURTLE.

## STEP 1: READ OVER THE TRAITS BELOW AND COUNT HOW MANY OF EACH YOU DISPLAY.



### Hailstorm Traits

Pursues partner when feeling disconnected  
Afraid of being abandoned  
Wants reassurance when feeling disconnected  
Feels emotions as physical pain in the body  
Prefers group activities  
More heart ruled, verbal and expressive  
Tends to put relationships before work  
Touches more  
Most attracted to Turtles in relationships



### Turtle Traits

Withdraws when feeling disconnected  
Afraid of being rejected or engulfed  
Wants “space” when feeling disconnected  
Often not sure how they feel  
Prefers own counsel  
More head ruled, living by logic and reason  
Tends to put work before relationships  
Touches less  
Most attracted to Hailstorms in relationships

## STEP 2: LIST THE NAMES OF ALL YOUR (SERIOUS) RELATIONSHIP PARTNERS:

## STEP 3: REFLECT

Reflect on how you *reacted* when you felt emotionally disconnected from each relationship partner. Think about how you *reacted* when you broke up. Write an **H** (for Hailstorm) or a **T** (for Turtle) next to the name of each partner you listed above based on the traits you displayed in each relationship.

**Note:** You will most likely have traits from both types, but will feel more comfortable with one more than the other. You also may also have displayed one set of traits in a one relationship and the other set of traits in another. However, you should notice that you’re naturally more inclined to use one set of traits more than the other.

## STEP 4: COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE

Out of all my important romantic relationships I have displayed Hailstorm traits \_\_\_\_ times and Turtle traits \_\_\_\_ times. Therefore, I conclude that I am more of the \_\_\_\_\_ type.

# HIDDEN FEAR EXERCISE

Underneath all recurring complaints are a fear and a covert plea for connection. When you are unaware of your fears it is easy to repeat relationship patterns over and over again, never getting to the heart of the issue.

This exercise will bring awareness to your hidden fears and unmet needs in your relationship.

## STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR COMPLAINT

Think of a time when you were upset with your partner and complained to them about their behavior. Find a complaint that sparks a strong emotional response in you when you think of it. Write down your complaint about your partner below. E.g. *He never takes the trash out.*

## STEP 2: OWN YOUR STORY

What is the story you're telling yourself about your complaint, your partner or your relationship? E.g. *He is selfish and only cares about doing things that he likes, while I have to do the dirty work.*

## STEP 3: UNCOVER YOUR FEAR

In this step we're going to uncover your unacknowledged fears, layer by layer. As you answer each question, remember not to censor yourself. If your answers don't make logical sense or seem rational, that's fine.

- a) What are you afraid might happen or be true if your story in Step 2 turns out to be true? E.g. *I'll have to do all the chores myself with no support from him.*
- b) What are you afraid might happen or be true if your answer to question **3a** (above) turns out to be true? E.g. *He only cares about himself and not me.*
- c) What are you afraid might happen or be true if your answer to question **3b** (above) turns out to be true? E.g. *He doesn't love me and may be having an affair.*
- d) What are you afraid might happen if your answer to question **3c** (above) turns out to be true? E.g. *I'll be heartbroken and alone for the rest of my life and never find anyone to love me.*

Continue asking and answering the questions in Step 3 until you feel that you have identified your core fear around this issue.

#### **STEP 4: DISCOVER YOUR COVERT PLEA**

Taking into account your insights from the answers you wrote, what do you want/need from your partner more than anything in the moments that your fear comes up for you (*your covert plea*)? E.g. *I want to feel loved and appreciated by you.*

#### **STEP 5: GET CLEAR**

Complete the following sentences based on your insights from answering the questions above:

*My complaint is...*

*The story I make up about this complaint is that...*

*What I'm afraid might be true is that...*

*If this happens, my worst fear is that...*

*What I need more than anything from my partner is when my fear comes up for me is... (try to focus on what you need to feel, not on what your partner must do for you).*

#### **STEP 6: SHARE YOUR DISCOVERIES WITH YOUR PARTNER AND REQUEST TO HAVE YOUR NEED MET**

Here are some tips for sharing your answers in a way that creates more intimacy between you:

- Schedule a time with your partner when you know that you will both be relaxed and have privacy. Allow at least 30 minutes to share with each other and talk about what comes up for you.
- Share with the intention of helping your partner get to know you, not with the intention of getting them to change.
- Share without blaming them or making them wrong.
- Give your partner the space to offer to fulfill your need without making a request. They may or may not offer. If they don't, ask lovingly.

#### **STEP 7: GET YOUR PARTNER ON BOARD WITH THIS EXERCISE**

Ask your partner if they would be willing to do this exercise and share their answers with you. Sharing with each other will bring you both closer together and help you break your pattern of conflict.